

TAFT GETS DRENCHED

Cloudburst at Charlotte as He
Reviews Parade.

LAUDS SPIRIT OF LIBERTY

Ability to Govern Shown in Meck-
lenburg Declaration.

PROGRAM IS CARRIED THROUGH

Two Addresses by President During
Day—Returns to Washington
on Late Train.

THE LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE FAUNAL GAME BAG.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., May 20.—A cloudburst broke over the city this afternoon and caused a panic in the dense crowd gathered in front of the stand from which President Taft was reviewing the Mecklenburg celebration parade. No one was seriously injured.

In the midst of the excitement and the feeling through one of the big industrial plants became entangled with a live electric light wire. The wire sagged almost to the heads of the people beneath.

To add to the turmoil and danger there was a loud report and a blinding flash not fifty yards from the reviewing stand. Just what caused the explosion is not known. The crowd scattered in all directions. Men and women alike rushed for the shelter of the President's stand. The President stepped to one side to give as much room as possible.

A tremendous downpour was soon beating its way through the canvas roof of the stand. Almost directly over the President's stand a great pool of water gathered threateningly.

President Gets Wet.

In the emergency some one brought a tall step ladder and men crawled up and cutting a hole in the canvas, let the water down in a perfect flood. This quick action prevented any further trouble than the partial drenching of the President.

Umbrellas were offered in profusion, but the President, of his own accord, rejected them. After the first mad rush for cover the crowds were soon quieted. The electric power was cut off and the excitement was soon over.

When quiet had been restored the President did not seem to mind the experience, at least, he stood smiling while the rain poured down.

Thousands of men and women were drenched to the skin. Many pretty costumes worn by those in the parade and in the street were ruined utterly. The parade was near its conclusion when the President remained until the last bedraggled foot went by and then, enter-

Throng Greets Mr. Taft.
President Taft, arriving at 10:15 a.m. from Petersburg, Va., was greeted by an immense throng, which had gathered at the Southern railway station. A heavy rain fell during the morning, but ceased just before Mr. Taft reached the city.
It required the services of several companies of militia to keep the cheering crowds at the depot in check as the President alighted and made his way to a

by Capt. Archibald Butt, his military aid, was met in North Carolina by a local committee.

Interest in the President's visit to Charlotte at this time centered in the attitude he would take toward the Mecklenburg declaration of independence, the anniversary of the signing of which is celebrated throughout the state of North Carolina the 20th day of each May.

Taft Upholds Declaration.

Mr. Taft takes the position that, regardless of the exact language of the declarations made in May, 1776, a full year before the signing of the Jefferson declaration at Philadelphia, July 4, 1776, the fact

dependence on the part of the citizens of North Carolina.

"It is not so material as to the exact language used," said the President today.

"The measure of a declaration for the principles of civil liberty and self-government is not so much the substance as the enunciation of the former controlling power as the provisions made for the future form of government."

"The impressive thing about the North Carolinian proposition is the sensible way in which the Government, after deciding to sever relations with Great Britain, went about the matter of setting up a government for the future. They appointed selectmen, provided for their military officers, their courts and forms of legal procedure."

"It showed not alone a desire for liber-

Guns Salute Taft.

The President, who yesterday was the guest of Petersburg, Va., upon his arrival here shortly before 11 o'clock, was met at the railway station by an imposing committee of citizens and soldiers at the entrance to the Selwyn Hotel. As the train bearing the President's car crossed the city limits a presidential salute of twenty-one guns was fired by the Charlotte Artillery.

Arriving at the hotel the President held a reception for one hour. At noon, with members of Union and Confederate veterans for his escort, accompanied by Mrs. Taft, the President proceeded to a reviewing stand from which he witnessed the passing of probably the most notable parade ever held in the city. The President, as military escort to the President during his stay in Charlotte, Troop

Altgether there were eight divisions to the pageant as follows: Military, industrial, floral, colonial, equestrian, farmers, fraternal societies and secret orders, automobiles and the fire department. Large detachments of the National Guard of both North and South Carolina were in the parade.

The industrial, colonial and floral divisions were made up of decorated floats. Over 200 farmers were in line on horse-